

To who it may concern.

My name is Mauro Guimaraes and I'm Joao Pedro Marques Gama's uncle. I would like to start this letter by saying that I saw in Joao Pedro a lot of potential since his early age, despite the very limited financial family resources and all difficulties he faced growing apart of his mother and no father.

When I left Brazil, he was 8 years old and I couldn't take care of him for long, with the distance and all difficulties experienced by my family trying to make a living with a big family, it's always a daunting task. But Joao Pedro was raised with love and care by my parents (his grandparents) and was taught to follow God and always seeking the right path in life. He always participates in the masses and grew up on the youth meetings groups at church. I visited my family in Brazil a few times and Joao's interests and curiosity about visiting another Country were always clear. I could see his determination when at age of 13 he starts working as a carpenter and once told me he would save up money to visit me in the U.S. but earning just enough to help the family with \$50 a month his dreams was certainly far from becoming reality.

When he turned 15, I helped him to get his US Visa with the condition that would keep studying in Brazil, then in 2015, I bought him a ticket to come and visit the U.S. By the time he was 17 and full of dreams and expectations. He lived with me for a short period of time and sure enough, he was decided to work and pay me back his ticket and any other expenses incurred with his trip. Joao Pedro was working and using his carpentry skills acquired in Brazil to help him start as I saw a good and promising life, his idea of pursuing a change of immigration status was his goal. But shortly after he left my house, I think his life took a bad turn. Living with some "friends" the work wasn't his priority any longer. I got calls from his employer asking if he would still work, as I tried to understand what was going on, but also busy with my daily work routine, days, weeks and months went by and his life was getting a horrifying shape.

More than once he asked me to order food for him and send it to his address, which was constantly changing.

When he turned 18, I offered him a ticket back home but was too late. He was so obsessed with staying in the US that he refuses and for a while, I didn't have any communication with him. I couldn't help him, because he wasn't allowing to be helped. The next thing that I learned was about his arrest.

I know Joao Pedro's acts had a really profound impact on his life, the consequences that he's facing since he was arrested made him change to that person who once had a dream of a good life, work, and education the so-called opportunities. For any immigrant who comes from a third-world country like Brazil, United States presents as a safe haven with endless possibilities, either for good or for bad. In Joao's case being weak and losing the battle for drugs and alcohol was an undeniable mistake that led him to what it took to maintain his dependency. But during these past 23 months, I could see his life having a purpose again, in the way he devolved determination to learn and become a better person being able to get his G.E.D. and pursuing some areas of interests demonstrates how his life perception has changed.

I can't predict the future, but I see him as a different person, a better person now. I hope that whoever reads this can also see *when a man who once walked on the right path and get lost, suffered, and learned will certainly prefer to stay on the right path for good.*

As a close family member, I hope Joao Pedro can have another chance to demonstrate that he is capable of adjusting his personality and to move forward on the right direction with his life.

I'm available to provide any other information as needed.

Thank you very much

Mauro Guimaraes  
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To whom it may concern

My name is Deluma Braga and I am Joao Pedro Gama's aunt. When he was born, I was ten years old, I remember it was like I had a younger brother, a lot because he was raised most of his life by my parents (his grandparents). Over time, I ended up assuming, even at a young age, my commitment as a second mother to him. Perhaps because my sister had him at a very young age and because he did not have a fatherly presence in his life, which did not make him lack the essential. He was always very caring and helpful, always trying to help others in some way. Our family has always been very participative in the church and we have always tried to lead him on that path. He was part of the youth group of the church for a long time and was always very active in the community. He was always determined to help his family, and got his first job through one of the youth group leaders, who saw in him a lot of willpower and ability to learn.

At that time, he worked and studied, always trying to help at home in some way, even with his small salary. With his curiosity and intelligent way, he was determined to help the family in some way, it was when my brother Mauro Guimaraes, offered him the chance to come to the USA to study to try a better life. Like everyone who arrives here he was delighted with so many possibilities to learn new things and help his family. It didn't take long for him to get his first job with the knowledge he had learned in Brazil and with the little English he learned by himself watching movies. He lived in my house for a while with my family, at the time we lived in an apartment in Malden. A while later he decided that he was going to live with some "friends" that he never told me his name or address. I didn't hear from him for days, which made me very worried, because as I said I considered him as a son, then he called and said he was working a lot and that was why I had not contacted him before.

I started to realize that he was not well when I learned that he had changed jobs a few times, but he never said what was going on. He said he didn't need help and that he was fine. He spent a difficult time, I didn't know where he was living or working, he even called me one night asking to pick him up because he was going to sleep on the street for not paying his rent, I tried to search for him without success. The next day he called me saying that his "friends" had picked him up. A while later I helped him to pick up his things at the home of a "friend" in Somerville, he told me that he had found a place to stay, that I could be calm. That same week I offered to buy his ticket so he could go back to Brazil, but he didn't want to, he said he was working and that he would be back soon, but that it wasn't the time yet.

The next thing I knew about his arrest, I was in shock, very sad and worried because like I said, he is like a son to me, a rebellious son who thinks he knows everything, but I never stopped worrying about him or to love him. He was weak and was taken by the "opportunity" to get everything and the promise of quick and easy money. I know that he has to pay for his actions and that he will never forget this time that is being grounded, but also a lot of learning for him to understand that we are our choices. When I went to visit him in Barnstable, I realized that he is aware that he will pay for the mistakes made and that he is very sorry for doing what he did. I believe that after all this time away from the family, he is a new man, who has different thoughts and who has learned the hard way that everything you do has consequences. When he gets out, I will be with open arms to welcome him and encourage him to follow his dreams, because I know that he has a future that awaits him ahead, and that he will still give a lot of pride to the family that he always wanted to help.

I'm available to provide any additional information if needed.

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To whom it may concern

My name is Felipe Braga, and I'm Joao Pedro Marques Guimaraes Gama's uncle-in-law, I've known Joao Pedro my entire life, as our families were always very close even before I married his aunt Deluma.

I remember how smart and outspoken he was at a very early age; everyone all saw potential on that little kid with all his experiments and ideas that he was always so proud to show us. While he was growing up, I always kept in touch with him, and I still remember a talk we had right after he started working part time as a carpenter, I could see it on his eyes the emotion while he explained some of his duties and how he was learning some new technic about a specific tool. And more important than all that, he was so happy about being able to help his family, as he knew how financially tough everything was at home.

Things were never easy for Joao Pedro, he was mainly raised by his grandparents, as his mother gave birth to him at a really young age, and was still learning how to be a provider to him, he also never had a father present on his life. With a big family and a small income, Joao Pedro's grandparents weren't always able to give to Joao Pedro everything that they wanted to when it comes to nice clothes, toys, favorite snacks, etc. They did however raise him with so much love that none of that was ever missed by him, and I never once heard Joao Pedro complain about not having certain things.

When he reached a more mature age, he realized he could do more, that he was capable of more, a better job, a better salary, just a better life. So, he started showing interest to learn about different places, different cultures, different careers, he was trying to find out who he was going to be, he wanted to help his family more, so at the age of 15 with the help of his uncle, he applied for a US visa so that he could come visit his uncle and aunt, and so that he could learn and see what's like outside of Brazil. The plan was for him to do a post high school education course at the US, but unfortunately that didn't go as planned.

Shortly after arriving at the US he just fell in love with the country, with the opportunities, with the life he could have and everything he would talk about at that point was how he could help his family. That he wanted to give his little brother and sister everything he never had. So, in pursuit of this dream, he started working in the construction sector. He stayed with me and my family in my apartment in Malden for a while before he could afford to live on his own.

After moving out of my apartment, during a small gathering to celebrate his aunt's birthday we noticed that he was different, he wasn't taking care of his appearance and he smelled like marijuana. We then asked to have a conversation with him after the party, and I didn't have a good feeling about some of the answers he was giving us, it just didn't sound like him anymore. We found out that he was living with some friends and that he had already changed jobs a few times on the last few weeks. We offered help which it was denied.

This was the beginning of the end for him, with time he got even more involved with the wrong friends, more drugs, more alcohol, at this point it was clear that he needed help as soon as possible, and that person was not the Joao Pedro I saw growing up, he was offered a ticket to go back home to live with his mother, which again he declined.

A few weeks went by and that's when we heard about his arrest, not really knowing exactly what happened, we were trying to get information from the local news reports that were coming out until

we came across the court document with all the details of everything he was being investigated for. I was in disbelief, not in a million year I would ever imagine that he would be involved with something like that and at first, I even said that it had to be a mistake, that maybe he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I can't speak for Joao Pedro, and I do believe on the law and paying for your mistakes. But I know that he regrets everything he did, I know the man he was, and the man he can be in the future. I hope that he can have a second chance to demonstrate he has changed, that he indeed found God again, that he's ready to be the man his belated grandfather always dreamed he would be, and that his mistake doesn't cost all years of his still early age.

I'm available to provide any additional information if needed.

Thank You

Felipe Braga  
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To whom it may concern:

My name is Vitoria Guimaraes and I am a friend of Joao Pedro Marques Gama's family. I initially met his aunt, Deluma Guimaraes, in 2014, and thereafter met his uncle, Mauro Guimaraes, and his grandmother, Lucia Guimaraes. They have become very close friends of mine, and in 2015 I met Joao Pedro when he arrived in the U.S. I had the opportunity to see him many times, especially during the time he was living with Deluma, as she is a very good friend of mine and I go visit her very often. He was always very polite, had a lot of dreams, and always showed to be very caring and respectful to everyone around him. It is of my knowledge that he and his family are catholic and have always participated in church activities, in Brazil and here in the U.S. It is also of my knowledge that he worked as a carpenter, but after a couple of years, he moved to live with his friends and I haven't had the opportunity to see him after.

I was informed by Deluma of his arrest, and I was shocked when I received the news. I have always thought of Joao Pedro as a good young man, but unfortunately, he took a wrong route that caused a profound impact in his life, and I truly believe he has learned that his acts have consequences, and is seeking now to become a better man. I believe in second chances, and anyone deserves one if they show that they can follow a good path and improve as a human being and to become a good asset to society, and I believe Joao Pedro is someone who has shown, through his time incarcerated, that he is someone who deserves a second chance.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information.

Sincerely,

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